A 101 197

/1 cont./ From a comparison of these names it is evident that the ethnic name of the Abkhaz was formed from aps, abs, aphs, aphsh. In the languages of the Caucasus, the sounds b, p, ph, m, v, and also s and sh, frequently alternate. Here are some examples: a-m-seba = a-v-seba = ap-h-she-pha /sic/, meaning "to fill"; suli = shuri, "soul"; m-ravali = b-ravali = b-reli = ph-reli, "many"; p-rke = b-rke, etc. Thus the identity of abs, aps, aphs, and absh, aps /sic/, and aphsh is beyond doubt. What, then, does abs or aphsh mean?

A 193

First of all it must be said that in the Abkhaz language nouns are preceded by "a," corresponding to the meaning of the article le or la in the French language. In compounds this "a" is often dropped. Let us, by way of example, take identical words in the Grusian and Abkhaz languages:

A G 192

Grusian	Abkhaz	
khalakhi	a-khalakh	town
nathla	a-nathra	baptism
kambechi	a-kambash	buffalo
nana	a-nan	mother
kharthueli	a-khirthua	Grusian
lazi	a-laz	Laz
kaba	a-kaba	dress
/2/		
kaltha	a-kaltha	tails /of a coat/
kherkhi	a-khuarkhi	file
makrateli	a-makratil	scissors
kibe	a-kiba	stairs, ladder
gemo	a-gema	taste
khvabi	a-khvab	kettle
ugheli (Svan /Swan/: ughu)	a-ughu	yoke
guli (Svan:gui)	a-gu	heart
zari	a-zar	lament, sobbing

G 193

Frequently the Grusian language, too, has recourse to the method of forming nouns from verbal roots, with the addition at the end of the noun of the auxiliary verb li or ari (1)

1. ari = is; in the Grusian language and

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZvibzha

'mothers' and 'God', are often pronounced in the same manner." [1] [196] [195]
"During the study of the different religious beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians," he continues, "we came across the following phrase among others: *antswə* r-*mərzə*—'the cause, guilt of God' (properly, 'the guilt or fault of gods,' N. Janashia). The roman r is the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural. . . . The above quoted construction—*antswə r-mərzə*—could not have been arrived at unless the word *antswə* was used in the plural," justly remarks the author; "were it in the singular, we would have had *antswə i-mərzə*."

Abkhasians regard the elements and manifestations of nature as rational beings. Each of these rational beings has his own gods, whom the orthodox Abkhasian serves honestly, in the light of his understanding. If the name of one, or more, of these gods has been forgotten by the people, he, the god, is simply called *inkhwə*[2]—"his 'part', 'share' of mother," or they use the full form *intswakhwə*—"his part of God," while under the influence of Christianity—*inəkhakhwə*, in which *akhwə* denotes "part, share, dole" and *anəkha*—"icon." [3]

In Abkhasian conception, God is One, but He is of infinitely numerous "doles" or parts. Not only each manifestation of nature, but also each tribe, family, or individual, has his own part of God, just as each Christian has his guardian-angel. The Abkhaz says *səntswakhwə*—"my (*s-* is the pronominal characteristic of the first person singular) part of God"; *untswakhwə*—"thy (*u-* is the pronominal characteristic of the second person singular) part of God." And it should be noted that one may offend against not only one's own "part of God", but also against "the part of God" of one's neighbour, or relation, etc. . . . [193]

This conception of the Deity as a multiform being appears to account for the fact that the word *antswə* is in the plural. Here I will note that such a conception evidently did not prevail among the Abkhasians only; its traces remain to this day even among the [191]

[1] P. Dcharnia, *On the Relation of the Abkhasian lang. to the Japhetic* (in Russian) in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics*, St. Pb., 1912, vol. iv, p. 65. 104

[2] The combination "*hhw*" represents a sound uttered with one breath impulse. The underlined "*hh*" ("*hh*") constitutes actually a trigraph in which the digraph "*hh*" represents a guttural fricative equivalent to German *ach-laut*, and the *linea subscripta* a hard diffusive glottal spirant, which is not to be identified with the palatal (front) "*h*", and which is represented elsewhere, independently, as "*h*"; the combination "*hh*" (= *hh* + *h*) is thus a deeper guttural, glottal, sound than the German *ach-laut*. The labial semi-vowel "*w*" represents the labialization of the preceding "*hh*". "*Khw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*hh*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet*, pp. 48 and 39; see also his *Abkhasian-Russian Dictionary*, Leningrad, 1926, pp. XXXV–XXXVI. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[3] I. Javakhishvili derives *anəkha* from the Georgian word *khati*, icon. May not *khati* be derived from the Abkhasian verb *akhat'ara*? *A-khə*, head, *at'ara*, to give, to set, to level the head. Or is it a mere consonance?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

[796] sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, [943] and *alaẖwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakût-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers [949] with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [969] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Anisẅà-hwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [354] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Anisẅà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *dămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nàkhak zəndə-yanû, bzhyə* [539] *—tswəmzàk zzəkàr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head [806] [801] of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaẖwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tkashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[193] [2] *hwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *govt* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[821] [191] [3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An, Anu—Anisẅà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

of an analogical formation in a *sh*-root- (= creating, to create, whence the verbal noun *ashard*) word *ashatsw̄a*, which represents an epithet of a deity, and is equivalent to Georgian *gamtcheni*, creator.[1] I have not heard this word used apart from its association with the word God. This root is usually used in its past-participle form. A popular Abkhasian expression is *antsw̄a-hazshaz*, Creator God, but the following phrases are also in common use:—*ashatsw̄a irshaz*, by the Creator (lit. creators') created (said of something very pleasing), and *ashatsw̄a irmshaz*, by the Creator (lit., creators') not created (said of something unpleasing). In these examples *ashatsw̄a* is understood to be in the plural, which is unmistakably borne out by the pronominal particle *r* (*i-r-shaz*, *i-r-mshaz*) which indicates the plurality of the subject (the determinative word in our examples).

It may, however, be argued that the phrases just quoted are composite, and that the particle indicated, a fossilized morphe which has lost its meaning. We will therefore quote another phrase, *nas ashatsw̄a irshàma art'*, "Is it possible that the Creator (lit. creators) created these?" (it was said of the animals), in which *ashatsw̄a* is directly represented as the subject in the plural. This word, and the notion conveyed by it, must have simultaneously undergone the same metamorphosis as the basic name itself, i.e., they must have lost first the intrinsic and then the formal meaning; it became a simple plurale tantum, for instance, in the widely used name for a kind of sacrificial animal, *ashatsw̄a-dzatw̄a*, the Creator's (lit. creators') sacrificial animal, in which we should have had, in accordance with the rules of the Abkhasian compound word-formation, the form *ashatsw̄a-rdzatw̄a*. . . .

It is clear that in this case the result of the acute conflict between old and new ideas, and in connection with it, between dead and living forms, is far less definite than in the case of *antsw̄a* itself. The changes to which the latter has been subjected have been more rapid; but nevertheless, owing to language inertia, we find facts which reveal the original meaning of the process of word-formation. One such fact, quoted by Uslar, is given above. Of no less interest, in my opinion, is an example I found: the heroine of a story which I noted down, bears the following name, *antsw̄a rt'əp'hà khànk̄wla*, that is "God (‖ gods)-their-daughter-Khakula" in other words, the god's daughter Khàkûla (Khàkûla being a girl's name). The same pronominal particle *r* (*r-t'əp'hà*) explicitly indicates here that for the remote ancestors of the speaker, God represented the union of numerous forces.[2]

[1] In Megrelian, *odabade*. See Janashia, *The Abkhasian Cult and Mode of Life* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, St. Pb., 1916, vol. v, issue 3, p. 168. Also Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 132.

[2] See also Dcharaia, op. cit., p. 32.